

Assyrian International News Agency, November 19, 2007

Washington -- The US Department of State, in a report to Congress, specifically identified the Kurdistan Regional Government's Ministry of Finance as a source of the "considerable hardship" the Christian ChaldoAssyrian community is facing.

The report was issued pursuant to the Emergency Supplemental Appropriation for FY 2007; which states: "The Committee is concerned regarding reports of U.S. reconstruction and relief assistance in Iraq not reaching all segments of the Iraq population, particularly minority populations. The Committee has heard reports of villages in the Nineveh Plain region not receiving assistance. Therefore, the Committee directs the Secretary of State to report [...] on the ethnic and geographic distribution of U.S. assistance programs and specifically a report on all U.S. assistance reaching the Nineveh Plain region."

Early on the report indicates, "In Ninawa, the Christian minority faces considerable hardship. Some factions are under-represented politically; some suffer from uneven resource transfers from the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and Ministry of Finance (MoF); and some experience human rights abuses."

The legislation and the issuance of the report itself are major achievements bringing attention to the crisis ChaldoAssyrians are facing. It creates the basis for developing a policy. The US Government's verification of the destructive, prejudicial role played by the KRG and MoF in the Nineveh Plain region, by exposing the efforts of the MoF in marginalizing segments of the community is vital for finding solutions to KRG-generated problems.

ISDP's policy work and briefings, underlying the development of the legislation, continues to raise concern of many in Congress. Representatives Mark Kirk, Joe Knollenberg and Frank Wolf spearheaded the legislation. Constant expressions of alarm at the deteriorating situation facing Christian ChaldoAssyrians by the Chaldean Assyrian Syriac Council of America played an important and timely role in this critical process.

ISDP's Project Director Michael Youash said, "Despite opening up to policy considerations for

Christian ChaldoAssyrians, the report lacked significant awareness of actual developments about US reconstruction on the ground -- that cannot be captured on data management systems. ISDP will continue to follow-up and ensure policy-makers are aware of the reality and the challenges on the ground for minorities."